

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1           1.       A network switch comprising:  
2           a backplane; and  
3           a plurality of interface cards coupled to the backplane via an interface, the  
4 interface cards coupled to receive multiple channels of network traffic from external  
5 sources, the plurality of interface cards to receive one or more channels of data according  
6 to a first protocol and one or more channels of data according to a second protocol, the  
7 interface cards to route the channels of data over the backplane to one or more  
8 predetermined interface cards.

1           2.       The network switch of claim 1 wherein the first protocol comprises a time  
2 division multiplexed (TDM) protocol.

1           3.       The network switch of claim 1 wherein the second protocol comprises a  
2 network traffic protocol.

1           4.       The network switch of claim 3 wherein the second protocol comprises an  
2 asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) protocol.

1           5.       The network switch of claim 3 wherein the second protocol comprises an  
2 internet protocol (IP).

1           6.     An interface card for use in a network switch, the interface card  
2     comprising:  
3           a backplane interface to transmit and receive data over a backplane;  
4           a network interface to transmit and receive multiple channels of network traffic  
5     from external sources, the multiple channels of network traffic to include one or more  
6     channels of data according to a first protocol and one or more channels of data according  
7     to a second protocol; and  
8           a time slot management circuit coupled between the backplane interface and the  
9     network interface, the time slot management circuit to route the channels of data over the  
10    backplane to one or more predetermined destinations.

1           7.     The interface card of claim 6 wherein the first protocol comprises a time  
2     division multiplexed (TDM) protocol.

1           8.     The interface card of claim 6 wherein the second protocol comprises a  
2     network traffic protocol.

1           9.     The interface card of claim 8 wherein the second protocol comprises an  
2     asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) protocol.

1           10.    The interface card of claim 8 wherein the second protocol comprises an  
2     internet protocol (IP).

1           11.     A method comprising:  
2           receiving multiple channels of network traffic from external sources via a network  
3           interface of an interface card, wherein the multiple channels of network traffic to include  
4           one or more channels of data according to a first protocol and one or more channels of  
5           data according to a second protocol;  
6           routing the channels of data via a backplane connection to one or more  
7           predetermined destinations.

1           12.     The method of claim 11 wherein the first protocol comprises a time  
2           division multiplexed (TDM) protocol.

1           13.     The method of claim 11 wherein the second protocol comprises a network  
2           traffic protocol.

1           14.     The method of claim 13 wherein the second protocol comprises an  
2           asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) protocol.

1           15.     The method of claim 13 wherein the second protocol comprises an internet  
2           protocol (IP).